



Wang wants to take soccer back to schools

By QIU QUANLIN
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — It was more than just a championship.

The Chinese women's soccer team's head coach, Wang Changquan, said the gold medal at the Universiade should inspire more young people to play soccer.



FOOTBALL

I hope that this victory will give all the spectators and students — from primary schools to universities — the urge to play soccer, so that Chinese women's soccer will get better and better in the near future," he said.

"In this regard, the gold has historical significance for us."

Wang, also a teacher at the Beijing Normal University, which boasts most of the players on the women's team at the Shenzhen Universiade, believes the only way to improve China's soccer development is to take it back to school.

"We won against Japan in the final. But it doesn't stop us from seeing the gap between Chinese and Japanese soccer," he said.

The head coach said the biggest chasm between the countries lies in the development of young players.

"We have fallen behind them in the development of soccer in schools. You can see that a great number of players in the Japanese teams, from the Under-20 level to

the national team, are from colleges," Wang said.

"School soccer is the foundation. Only with boosted development of school soccer can China be competitive on the international stage."

An extra-time goal from Fan Tingting gave China a 2-1 win against Japan in the final at Bao'an Stadium on Sunday evening.

For China, the gold means a second Universiade women's soccer title; the first was in 1993. It was also the first time a host has won the gold.

Members of that 1993 team have helped nurture many players, including former captain Sun Wen, midfielder Liu Ailing and goalkeeper Gao Hong.

But China has fallen behind Japan and South Korea since the 1993 players retired.

"After 18 years, the championship this time should provide a major stimulation for Chinese women's soccer, which has been at a low level of development for more than a decade," Wang said.

Wang says he will still stay at the university to continue teaching soccer.

"I will not leave. My career is based in the university," said Wang, who also denied he would coach the national women's team.

China's captain, Bi Yan, also a student at Beijing Normal University, said the victory would raise the ambitions of many young students.



JUBILANT JAPANESE

PHOTO BY WU JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Akito Kawamoto of Japan celebrates scoring against Britain in the Universiade men's soccer final. The Asian powerhouse beat the Brits 2-0 to win its fifth Universiade soccer gold medal.

Japan settles for silver, and a little bit of inspiration

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SHENZHEN — A silver medal will have to suffice for a team that wanted to bring more joy to a nation battling back from a disaster.

The Japanese women's soccer team wasn't just trying to win a gold at the Universiade — it was also working to provide a bright spot for a country still reeling from March's earthquake and tsunami.

"Some of my players are from the disaster area. We trained very hard and wanted to win each game because we had received support from people there," said coach Hiroyuki Horino.

Horino appeared in the press conference room after the 2-1 loss to China in the final on Saturday evening wearing an armband reading "Go Japan."

"We did not win the gold. But a silver is also enough for people

in the disaster-hit area to cheer for with us," he said. "Like we did the job in each game, the players, together with the Japanese people, will never give up their efforts to gain better results."

Japan displayed its excellent form and fitness in the group matches and advanced to the final after defeating France 3-2 in the semifinal.

"We set the goal of winning the gold when we started training and all the players did well," Horino

said. "A team cannot win only with technique. Mood and attitude are very important, along with technical skills."

Japanese striker Hikari Nakade scored a goal in the 32nd minute against China. But the team eventually lost on an extra-time goal from China's Fan Tingting.

"We did not achieve our goal, but the girls have shown their spirit to fight until the last minute of the game, Horino said. "This was also

the spirit we need for people from the disaster-hit area."

Japanese captain Risa Ikadai, also wearing an armband, hoped the loss in the final would not disappoint players from the disaster-hit area.

"My teammates (from the area) deeply felt the suffering. They played very hard throughout the tournament. I hope they can be encouraged although we only claimed a silver," she said.